



State of Delaware  
**DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY**  
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**Delaware Judiciary and Capitol Police Partner to Bring  
Facility Dog to the Leonard Williams Justice Center**

Capitol Police K-9 Provides Comfort to Children and Parents Attending Court Proceedings

The Delaware Judiciary welcomed its first “facility” or comfort dog to the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center in partnership with the Delaware Capitol Police.

“We want to thank the Capitol Police for launching this innovative pilot program, and we welcome K-9 Officer Vinn to the Leonard L. Williams Justice Center,” said Chief Justice Collins J. Seitz, Jr. “The courthouse does not have to be a scary place and we believe the services of Officer Vinn will help make the Justice Center more welcoming, or at least not as stressful, particularly for children involved in court proceedings.”

Delaware Capitol Police became interested in participating in a facility dog program more than a year ago after learning about the New Castle County Police Department’s success with its comfort dog, Nikko, and later meeting with the K-9 officer and its handlers.

Delaware Capitol Police Chief Michael F. Hertzfeld, who created and drafted a pilot program, worked with the Judicial Branch to implement it, culminating in Officer Vinn’s placement at the Justice Center in late 2022.

“Vinn is a highly trained K-9 that loves interaction with people. He has a natural personality and demeanor that is different from our other working dogs at the courthouse. He is the perfect new addition to our police division for us to achieve our commitment to the citizens of Delaware,” said Chief Hertzfeld.

Vinn has been trained to help those dealing with anxiety in a courtroom or courthouse setting and will be available on an appointment and as-needed basis, depending on the dog’s availability. Since arriving at the courthouse late last year, Officer Vinn has helped in a number of Family Court proceedings, like Protection from Abuse hearings, but has not yet participated in a trial in a courtroom.

The final determination will be at the discretion of the Delaware Capitol Police and the dog's handler. A web page to request Officer Vin's assistance can be found on the Delaware Judiciary's homepage at <https://courts.delaware.gov/aoc/facilitydog.aspx>. Requests made on the page are forwarded to the Delaware Capitol Police, and Officer Vinn's handler Sr. Cpl. Donna DiClemente.